

# SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES AND DISINFORMATION: OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

by

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Lately there has been increased public attention regarding Soviet "disinformation" and "active measures," attempts by Moscow to influence political attitudes and public opinion in non-communist countries through deceptive and often covert means.

Yet serious analysis has been limited. There has been a great deal of focus on Moscow's espionage endeavors, but this other facet of the Kremlin's intelligence operations has received far less scrutiny, either by the press or academics.

The terminology pertaining to the subject is unfamiliar and loosely defined, even among specialists. In fact, the terms "active measures" and "disinformation" are both imported directly from the Soviet intelligence lexicon. "Disinformation," the more frequently used and better-known term, is the English transliteration of the Russian "dezinformatsiya" or misinforming through the dissemination of information that is totally or partially false. The phrase "active measures" is the English translation of "aktivnyye meropriyatiya," the name of the Soviet KGB unit charged with implementing these activities.

In Soviet intelligence doctrine, the concept of "active measures" covers a wide span of practices including disinformation operations, political influence efforts, and the activities of Soviet front groups and foreign communist parties. All active

measures have the common goal of enhancing Soviet influence, usually by tarnishing the image of opponents. They generally involve elements of deception and often employ clandestine means to mask Moscow's hand in the operation.

Overall, where active measures fit in the Soviet framework may be better understood by considering the whole spectrum of Soviet foreign policy endeavors through the optic of "white," "gray," and "black" operations. Normal diplomatic, trade, aid, and informational efforts can be considered "white" or overt activities. "Gray" activities are those involving communist fronts, foreign communist parties, "clandestine" radio stations, or well-known media outlets for disinformation. While not officially acknowledged to be Soviet sponsored, semi-overt "gray" activities are widely known as under Soviet direction and control. In contrast, "black" activities involve genuinely clandestine operations: the use of agents of influence, spreading false rumors, duping politicians and journalists, and disseminating forgeries and fake documents. Active measures fall under either the "gray" or the "black" rubric, although the line between the semi-overt and the clandestine is often blurred.

Finding an appropriate English phrase to describe active measures is difficult. Former Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger has written: "No phrase in English

conveys precisely the meaning of active measures. Perhaps World War II psychological warfare operations provide the closest parallel.<sup>3</sup>

## BACKGROUND

The Soviets first used active measures as a policy tool in the 1920s when Moscow sought to discredit emigré groups in Western Europe, particularly in France, by spreading disinformation and by luring emigré activists back to Russia through various subterfuges. Even before the 1917 Revolution, the Tsarist secret police employed similar deceptive techniques, using foreign agents not only to collect intelligence but also to sow dissent among emigré groups and, by covert subsidies to selected journals, to attempt to create a better foreign press for Imperial Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1950s the Soviet Union institutionalized these practices, establishing an intelligence unit that specialized in disinformation; this was Department D within the First Chief Directorate of the Soviet intelligence organization. In the 1960s, the term "active measures" appeared on the scene when the name of Department D was changed to the Active Measures Department, Department A for short. This conveyed the idea that these activities, as conceived by Soviet authorities, were broader than mere dissemination of disinformation or the circulation of fake documents.

In 1968, the non-communist world received a clearer picture of active measures with the defection of Ladislav Bittman, onetime chief of the disinformation section of Czechoslovakian intelligence. Bittman's book, *The Deception Game*, offered a comprehensive discussion of active measures; in many respects, it is still the most lucid one.<sup>3</sup> According to Bittman, the principal aim of Czechoslovakian operations was to damage the West German image by fabricating links between West German officials and the Nazis. The most dramatic venture in which Bittman participated was Operation Neptune, the "discovery" in June 1964 of a trunkful of forged Nazi documents at the

bottom of a lake. Publicity in the West about the cache stirred latent anti-German sentiments, as the Czechs and their Soviet collaborators had hoped.<sup>4</sup>

In the mid-1970s, there was another indication that the Soviets attached increased importance to active measures; the KGB's active measures unit was organizationally upgraded from a department to a service and placed under the direction of a KGB general. In the latter 1970s Western Europe saw a vigorous active measures campaign to intensify opposition to the neutron bomb and later to fan the flames of the incipient peace movement to oppose the NATO decision to deploy intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF).<sup>5</sup> There was also a series of bold forgeries intended to cause friction in relations between the United States and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.<sup>6</sup>

US State Department reports and CIA testimony in 1982 hearings before the House Intelligence Committee charged that a high level of active measures has continued.<sup>7</sup> State Department Special Report No. 110, released in September 1983, stated that these activities "have grown in boldness and intensity, reflecting what appears to be increased use of active measures as a policy instrument by the Soviets and their allies."<sup>8</sup>

## ORGANIZATION

Within the KGB, the First Chief Directorate has responsibility for active measures as part of its charter to collect foreign intelligence and conduct overseas intelligence operations. The active measures unit, Service A, is organized along functional and geographic lines. Its half dozen departments have a staff of about 300 but draw on other elements of the KGB and Soviet government for people with specialized skills, such as translators.

Service A processes proposals for new active measures sent to Moscow by KGB residencies, monitors approved active measures being conducted in various parts of the world, and provides technical support—such as preparing fake documents and forgeries—for operations. Service A coordinates active

measures with KGB regional and country desks, and with other concerned elements of the Soviet government. It maintains close liaison with the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, which provides direction to front groups and foreign communist parties. In addition, Service A cooperates with the International Information Department of the CPSU, founded in 1978 to coordinate Soviet external publicity and propaganda.

The KGB often works in harness with friendly intelligence services in conducting active measures; indeed, it is at times difficult to know if the Soviets or a cooperative intelligence service is implementing an operation. Since the purpose is the same, the difficulty in differentiating a KGB operation from a satellite active measure is not really significant.

Former KGB Major Stanislav Levchenko, an active measures specialist who defected to the United States in 1979, has shed some interesting light on these operations.<sup>9</sup> According to Levchenko, all KGB residencies now consider active measures, along with traditional espionage, as a key part of their work. Residencies propose new active measures and assess past undertakings in the annual plan sent to Moscow every December. While they can suggest new operations to take advantage of opportunities at any time during the year, final approval must come from KGB headquarters.

Moscow itself can instruct residencies to conduct operations and does so frequently. Although the techniques of active measures vary, Levchenko stresses that all reinforce Soviet policy objectives. The United States and the NATO Alliance, as the Soviet Union's chief foes, are the principal targets; however, Major Levchenko's revelations about Japan make clear that active measures have a global aim.<sup>10</sup> The geographic location of the active measure and the target are not necessarily the same. A false story—for example, the *Times of India* account that the United States labeled blood for export by race—may be floated in India, but the main target audience may be elsewhere, in this case, Black Africa.<sup>11</sup>

Within KGB residencies, the active measures cell forms part of the political intelligence or Line PR unit. The size varies with the importance of the post and the potential for active measures. In Tokyo, where Levchenko was assigned, there were five KGB officers working on active measures; they in turn managed about 25 Japanese agents. According to Levchenko, who ostensibly was the Tokyo correspondent for the Soviet magazine *New Times*, journalistic cover is especially desirable for active measures work since it provides greater access to politically influential people than the diplomatic cover normally assumed by KGB officers.<sup>12</sup>

Posing as a journalist is not always foolproof. In April 1983, Swiss authorities charged that Alexei Dumov, the Bern correspondent for the Soviet news agency Novosti, had misused his position for "disinformation, subversion and agitation" and expelled the Russian. The Swiss stated that Dumov, a KGB officer, carried on "political and ideological indoctrination" of Swiss anti-nuclear and peace movement adherents, provided clandestine support for the December 1981 peace rally, and helped organize a 1982 demonstration in the Swiss parliament.<sup>13</sup>

#### POLITICAL INFLUENCE OPERATIONS

*Fronts.* Most major communist front organizations date to the early postwar years. The World Peace Council (WPC), which remains the largest and best-known group,

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was formed in 1949 as part of the Soviet campaign to capture the "peace" issue from the West. The WPC faithfully echoes the Kremlin's foreign policy line through its yearly work programs and periodic international assemblies. Its longtime chairman, Indian communist Romesh Chandra, makes little attempt to conceal the WPC's subservience to Moscow. He declared in 1975, "The World Peace Council in its turn positively reacts to all Soviet initiatives in international affairs."<sup>14</sup>

Other major fronts, such as the World Federation of Free Trade Unions, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the International Union of Students, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, the Christian Peace Conference, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the International Organization of Journalists, and the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization, provide Moscow similarly pliant organizational platforms across the spectrum of professions and interest groups and with Third World nations.

The WPC, other international front organizations, and bilateral friendship societies are generally recognized today as Soviet policy instruments; as such, they have only limited capacity to mobilize or influence public opinion outside communist countries or radical nonaligned countries that cooperate with Moscow. Regional affiliates of international fronts have in some instances greater credibility. Front affiliates in Latin America, for example, especially in the labor, cultural, and journalism fields, have succeeded in attracting meaningful non-communist membership, thereby greatly increasing their value to Moscow and Havana.

*Parties.* Foreign communist parties vary from country to country in strength and their relationship to Moscow. Some, like the parties of Portugal, Greece, and India, and the minuscule US Communist Party, are subservient to Moscow and follow detailed directives. Some, like the Italian Communist Party or the Indian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), while sharing many policy positions with the Soviets, choose their own political paths independent of Moscow. Still others, like the French Communist Party, fall

in between, accepting Moscow's lead on most but not all issues.

Parties and international fronts under Moscow's control receive policy direction from the International Department of the CPSU. Moscow is frequently a source of financial support. When funds are transferred clandestinely, the KGB normally provides the channel. In 1982 hearings before the House Intelligence Committee, Ed O'Malley, the FBI's counterintelligence chief, testified that KGB officers assigned to the Soviet Embassy in Washington perform this service for the US Communist Party.<sup>15</sup>

On occasion, the Soviets get sloppy. In January 1980 the New Zealand security service apprehended Soviet Ambassador Sofinskiy personally passing money to the head of the Socialist Unity Party, the local pro-Moscow communist group, in an Auckland hotel room. He was declared *persona non grata* and expelled from New Zealand.<sup>16</sup>

Despite their tarnished credentials, international fronts and parties continue to be regarded by Moscow as useful active measures instruments, providing platforms to amplify the Soviet foreign policy line, especially in the Third World. The Soviets have taken advantage of this in arenas such as the United Nations, where the WPC and other fronts have formal standing as non-governmental organizations. Of increasing importance in recent years, however, is their behind-the-scenes role as a source of trained cadres to work in Moscow-approved propaganda campaigns, a relatively discreet channel for Moscow to fund favored activities without advertising its hand, and a means of influencing broader-based umbrella organizations, such as the peace movements in Western European countries.<sup>17</sup>

*The Agent of Influence.* The extent of this type of "black" active measure is much harder to gauge than that of the more visible "gray" activities of front groups and local pro-Moscow communists. To be effective, agents of influence must remain clandestine. Once exposed, they lose all utility.

The ideal agent of influence is someone close to the Western or non-aligned nation's senior leadership; the most striking example

in recent years was the East German agent Gunther Guillaume, who was a personal assistant of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. Although of primary value to East Berlin and Moscow as a source of intelligence because of his unique access to Western secrets, Guillaume could also serve as an influence agent with Brandt.

While it is tempting to label the dramatic 1985 defectors Hans-Joachim Tiegde, a senior West German counterintelligence official, and Mikhail S. Gordievsky, the KGB chief in London, as agents of influence, this seems unlikely. Both were high-level intelligence officers and presumably were excellent sources of clandestine information. It appears doubtful their utility would be jeopardized by trying to use them as influence agents.

A more plausible influence operation was the highly publicized case of Norway's Foreign Ministry press spokesman Arne Treholt, who was arrested in January 1984. Treholt was taken into custody at Oslo's airport about to depart for a clandestine meeting with his KGB handler in Vienna. Recruited during the late 1960s, Treholt rose to senior levels of the Norwegian Labor Party before becoming Foreign Ministry press spokesman in 1983. Treholt provided the KGB with classified Norwegian and NATO secrets (in 1982-83 he attended the Defense Institute, Norway's equivalent to the US National War College), and he served as an agent of influence. In this latter capacity, he furthered positions favorable to the Soviets in Norwegian political deliberations, for example, the adoption of the Soviet-sponsored Nordic nuclear free zone proposal.<sup>18</sup>

Influence operations also can be undertaken by less-exalted agents like French journalist Pierre-Charles Pathe, who served the Soviets from 1959 until convicted in 1980. Through subtle support for the Soviet line, Pathe tried to influence readers of his newsletter and his wide range of political contacts.<sup>19</sup> Another lower-level operation came to light in 1981 when Denmark declared that Arne Herloev Petersen, a freelance journalist, was providing the Soviets a covert link with the peace movement.<sup>20</sup> Major

Levchenko also created a stir in 1982 when he publicly named a number of Japanese as Soviet agents of influence. Among the most influential were an editor of the conservative newspaper *Sankei Shinbun* and several leaders of the Japanese Socialist Party.<sup>21</sup>

#### MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION INFLUENCE OPERATIONS: DISINFORMATION

Disinformation involves various practices, including circulating false or misleading news stories, surfacing forgeries, broadcasting over clandestine radio transmitters, and spreading rumors. Whatever technique is employed, the purpose is the same: to distort the adversary's perception by gaining acceptance for some point the Soviets wish to make that is either not true or a distortion of the truth.

When mounting a disinformation operation, the KGB ideally would like to surface stories in non-communist media rather than relying on placements in the fellow-traveling or communist press. The reason is evident: spreading disinformation via untainted outlets advances the prospects for credible replay of the distorted story. However, it is no easy task to achieve publication in reputable journals, and the KGB continues to surface disinformation in pro-Soviet news outlets, such as the *Bombay Blitz*, in the hope that the bogus story will gain acceptance through repetition even though the initial report may lack credibility. The campaign to implicate the CIA in the assassination attempt on the Pope is an example of this technique. Nonetheless, a number of widely circulated non-communist journals, including *Jeune Afrique* of Paris, the Italian newsweekly *Panorama*, the influential *Times of India*, and the conservative *Jang*, Pakistan's leading Urdu language journal, have been victimized by disinformation in recent years.<sup>22</sup>

Because many disinformation operations need tangible "proof" to gain acceptance, the Soviets provide fabricated documents and forgeries as evidence. Indeed the Soviets have made such extensive use of forgeries of US government documents that this has become

a hallmark of their postwar disinformation operations. In 1961, then CIA Assistant Director Richard Helms told the US Senate Judiciary Committee that some 32 forgeries of official US documents had been uncovered during the preceding four years.<sup>23</sup> Nineteen years later, John McMahon, then head of the CIA's clandestine service, testified before the House Select Committee on Intelligence in a similar vein about two dozen forgeries that had surfaced following the establishment of the Active Measures Service in the mid-1970s.<sup>24</sup> According to US reports, the flow of forgeries has continued in the 1980s; more than 30 faked documents have come to light and several earlier forgeries have resurfaced. These durable fabrications include a supposed US Army field manual on destabilization (FM 30-31B) and a bogus pamphlet outlining US plans for nuclear war in Western Europe, called the Holocaust papers.<sup>25</sup>

The subject matter of Soviet forgeries in the 1980s ranges the globe:

- Murdered Afghan leader Amin's supposed links with the CIA (fake 1980 Embassy Islamabad telegram).<sup>26</sup>
- US pressure on Spain over NATO entry (forged 1981 Reagan-King Juan Carlos letter).<sup>27</sup>
- US-NATO pressure against the peace movement (forged 1982 Haig-Luns letter).<sup>28</sup>
- European gas pipeline controversy (fake 1982 US Commerce Department memo).<sup>29</sup>
- Possible US overthrow of Greek government (fake 1982 Clark-Stearns letter and intelligence study).<sup>30</sup>
- Close US-South Africa ties (bogus letter to Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick from a South African official, and two forged letters from US companies to the head of South Africa's air force, all in 1982).<sup>31</sup>
- US plans to overthrow the Ghana regime (fake 1983 West German Embassy report).<sup>32</sup>
- Destabilization of Poland (bogus 1983 Brzezinski NSC memo, and fake 1983 letter from an AFL/CIO official).<sup>33</sup>
- US policy toward the Third World and support for "Balkanization" of India

(fake 1983 policy speech by UN Ambassador Kirkpatrick).<sup>34</sup>

- US assassination plan in Nigeria (bogus 1983 Embassy Lagos document).
- Alleged US hand in the papal assassination controversy (1983 forgeries of two Embassy Rome cables).

The latter two instances are fairly typical illustrations of how disinformation operations are conducted. The Nigeria operation, which was a success for the Soviets, started on 13 April 1983 when two major daily newspapers in Ibadan, the *Nigerian Tribune* and the *Daily Sketch*, carried on their front pages allegations that US Ambassador Thomas Pickering had approved plans to assassinate the major opposition candidate in Nigeria's presidential race, Chief Awolowo, and his associate, Chief Abiola.

These sensational charges were based on an alleged internal US Embassy memorandum recommending the killing of the two political leaders. Although the American Embassy in Lagos immediately denounced the document as a fabrication (the supposed author was a US Information Agency officer formerly assigned to Nigeria) and branded the *Sketch* and *Tribune* stories totally false, the allegation created a major stir in Nigeria. It was also replayed as straight news elsewhere in Africa by the Western wire services and quickly repeated by East European and Soviet media. While the story was eventually put to rest, a senior US official conceded that many in Nigeria believed the charge or at least thought it possibly true. This was so even though the text of the fake USIA document contained a telltale linguistic error, its use of the term "wet affair." In American English the phrase is meaningless; "wet affair" is, however, the euphemism for "assassination" in Soviet intelligence jargon.<sup>35</sup>

The papal assassination disinformation operation occurred in Italy in July 1983, and failed. A left-wing Rome newsweekly, *Pace e Guerra*, alleged in a sensationalized story that the United States, together with Italian intelligence and pro-United States elements in the Socialist Party, had orchestrated a large-scale disinformation campaign designed to

pin the blame for the assassination plot on Moscow and Sofia. The "proof" of US complicity rested on two fabricated American Embassy Rome telegrams. The first detailed the "proposed" campaign to influence West European media, while the second forged telegram expressed satisfaction with the results. This message declared, "The European media have enthusiastically developed themes along the lines anticipated: that the gunman was directed by the Bulgarian secret police; that the Bulgarians are under the total control of the KGB; that the KGB was headed at the time by the present Soviet leader [Andropov]."<sup>36</sup>

A prompt and convincing denial by the US Embassy squelched this disinformation gambit. The Italian press tagged the cables as bogus and labeled the effort a Soviet active measure. In its denial, the Embassy was able to point out several serious formatting errors in the forged telegrams. The fact that *Pace e Guerra* had close links with the Democratic Party of Proletarian Unity (PDUP), whose members of parliament were elected on a joint list with the Communist Party, also raised questions about the authenticity of the charges, especially as the newsweekly refused to say how it had obtained the alleged cables.<sup>37</sup>

Over the years the technical quality of KGB forgeries has improved. The formatting is on the whole good, usually sufficiently so to fool those unfamiliar with US government documents or unwilling to seek expert opinion. There are, however, not infrequent discrepancies and mistakes; it is difficult for an outsider, even a KGB expert, to duplicate US government documents with total accuracy given the frequent changes in form and bureaucratic jargon. While the American English in most documents is colloquial, there are occasional linguistic mistakes, such as the use of British rather than American phraseology.<sup>38</sup>

Many disinformation campaigns do not involve forgeries; they seek to gain public acceptance for the distortion through repetition and periodic resurfacing. Several recent examples illustrate this technique:

- A complex tale that circulated in the African press in 1981 that US, Zairian, and South African intelligence were conspiring to overthrow the Angolan government. In addition to a number of African papers, this report was carried by the *Portugal Hoje*, a Lisbon paper close to the Portuguese Socialist Party.<sup>39</sup>

- A campaign begun in late 1981 to blame the United States for the attempted overthrow of the Seychelles government by South Africa-based mercenaries. After Soviet media spread the word that the CIA was behind the coup, a number of African papers, including the prestigious Nairobi *Nation* and the *Lagos Daily Times*, leading dailies in Kenya and Nigeria, replayed this disinformation.<sup>40</sup>

- A 1983 disinformation operation falsely alleging US, Israeli, and South African cooperation to deploy cruise missiles in Africa led to stories in a number of papers despite repeated US denials.<sup>41</sup>

- An effort ongoing since 1982 to deflect criticism of possible Soviet use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia by charging US use of biological warfare in Afghanistan and Central America. Even though the United States promptly labeled the report which first appeared in the 2 February 1982 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* as "utterly baseless," it was later published in respected non-communist papers, including the *Times of India*, the *Lahore Jang*, and the *Muslim News* of South Africa.<sup>42</sup>

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTIVE MEASURES

Active measures represent a limited but not unimportant technique which the USSR uses to advance its interests by attempting to influence foreign public opinion and attitudes. Measuring the technique's significance remains a highly subjective exercise, which many evaluators prefer to duck. Looked at broadly, there appears to be a marked difference between the effects on the Western industrial democracies and the Third World. In the West, there are plenty of signs

of Soviet activity, but little evidence that the Kremlin has achieved much substantial success in manipulating the essential political processes of democratic countries through active measures. With regard to the United States, the FBI declared in public testimony in 1982, "We do not see Soviet active measures in the United States as having a significant impact on U.S. decision-makers."<sup>43</sup>

Disinformation efforts appear to fare poorly in Western democracies with their free press. With a few exceptions, disinformation has largely surfaced either in sensationalist or pro-communist journals where it has little impact on public opinion. Responsible journalists and journals check out suspicious-sounding allegations or anonymous documents. They do not generally publish stories lacking supporting evidence and sourcing.

Still the Soviets have mounted a substantial effort to influence Western opinion through various active measures. One of the most dramatic is the alleged KGB sponsorship of the Athens daily *To Ethnos*, the largest newspaper in Greece. *London Daily Telegraph* and *New York Times* reporter Paul Anastasi provides a detailed and graphic account of this effort in his book, *Take the Nation in Your Hands*.<sup>44</sup>

In the Third World, disinformation operations have often scored bull's-eyes and the cumulative effect has helped sour public opinion against the United States and its allies. Why the dichotomy between the developed and developing world? One explanation lies with the state of the respective media. Looser professional standards of journalism in many Third World countries work to the KGB's advantage. In much of the Third World, forgeries can be floated with relative ease. There is often a willingness to accept faked documents at face value without seeking confirmation or at least offering the target an opportunity to reply. Since Third World media are often financially wobblier than those in major Western democracies, the blandishment of KGB funds is more tempting. Government control of much of the media also makes susceptibility to active measures a reflection of government political orientation.

As important, in many parts of the Third World the Soviets are able to exploit anti-American attitudes caused by long-standing policy differences with Washington. In Africa, as Robert Keeley, then US Ambassador to Zimbabwe, told *The Washington Post*, Soviet disinformation can take advantage of existing African suspicions toward US policies, particularly those relating to South Africa.<sup>45</sup> Disinformation operations in Africa play to and reinforce these doubts about the United States.

Similarly, Soviet disinformation takes advantage of anti-American attitudes in India, in this case stirred by US arms assistance to Pakistan. For more than a generation, the Soviets have fanned anxiety about US policies through a steady stream of disinformation spread by publications like *Blitz*, *Patriot*, and *Link* and amplified by a small but vocal pro-Moscow Communist Party of India and local pro-Soviet fronts.<sup>46</sup> Even though the bogus Kirkpatrick "Balkanization" speech was branded a fake by *India Today*, the country's premier newsmagazine,<sup>47</sup> a respected Indian journalist told the author that many would believe the story because of the inclination to accept the worst about US intentions after so many years of foreign policy friction between Washington and New Delhi.

#### HOW BEST TO RESPOND?

Countering active measures is not an easy task. When the KGB violates local laws in active measures operations, counter-intelligence agencies have the basic responsibility. But their experience is more attuned to dealing with traditional espionage than to covert attempts to influence public opinion. Moreover, it is frequently difficult to distinguish between legal "white" or "gray" propaganda activities and illegal, clandestine, "black" operations.

Responding to disinformation also raises significant questions of judgment. If the targets remain silent, there is little incentive for Moscow and its friends to desist. But if they respond too vociferously, they may be crediting active measures with greater influence over public opinion than is the case. Generally Western governments have taken

the former approach and decided to ignore active measures even when exposed. "We do not wish to dignify a forgery with a comment," is a fairly typical response by government press spokesmen when a fabrication surfaces. The problem with silence is that it encourages the Soviets to continue the "dirty tricks" game. It ensures that active measures remain a "no lose" proposition for the Kremlin.

Viewing active measures through Soviet eyes may help in framing the response. Moscow takes an extremely long-term view of these operations. The Soviets do not necessarily seek immediate gains and are not looking for a major impact from every effort. They are satisfied that the cumulative effect of periodic successes outweighs failures and misfires and makes their considerable investment of people and money worthwhile.

A similarly long-term strategy is needed in response. The key should be a steady flow of factual information to expose active measures when this can be done in a credible manner. As former Under Secretary of State Eagleburger wrote, "They are infections that flourish only in darkness, and sunlight is the best antiseptic."<sup>148</sup> When governments become aware of active measures or disinformation operations directed against them, they should speak out. The best means of rendering the ground less fertile is to ensure that people, especially in the Third World, are fully aware of attempts to deceive them.

Informed publics and the media in non-communist countries will then have a chance to draw their own conclusions. Few appreciate being gulled by the deliberate distortion of the news. However, the response to active measures needs to be non-polemical and avoid hyperbole. Vague charges are not the way to proceed. Detailed supporting information is needed. Reliance on classified information which cannot be released provides a poor basis for a sustained response to active measures.

The soundest strategy for dealing with disinformation thus has two main ingredients: a steady flow of facts and lots of patience. The Soviets have been at the deception game a long time. Realistically, they are not going to desist until others ensure

through repeated exposure that active measures no longer pay off.

#### NOTES

1. Lawrence Eagleburger, "Unacceptable Intervention: Soviet Active Measures," *NATO Review*, 31 (April 1983).
2. Wojciech Karpinski, "Agents and Exiles," *Survey*, 27 (Autumn-Winter 1983), 41-48.
3. Ladislav Bittman, *The Deception Game* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Research Corp., 1972). A more recent overview is provided in Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Desinformatsia* (Washington: Pergamon Brassey's, 1984). This offers a useful analysis of the relationship between overt propaganda and themes stressed through active measures.
4. Bittman, pp. 39-78.
5. US Congress, House, *Soviet Covert Action (The Forgery Offensive)*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1980), pp. 75-77. For an analysis of the USSR's propaganda campaign against the neutron bomb, see Steven D. Syms and Edward Snow, Jr., "Soviet Propaganda and the Neutron Bomb Decision," *Political Communication and Persuasion*, 1 (No. 3, 1981), 257-68.
6. These and other fabricated documents from the late 1970s are discussed in *Soviet Covert Action (The Forgery Offensive)*. The US-Egyptian forgeries are reviewed on pp. 138-60.
7. US Congress, House, *Soviet Active Measures*, Hearings before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives (Washington: GPO, 1982); "Soviet Active Measures: Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations," *State Department Special Report No. 88* (Washington: US Department of State, October 1981); "Soviet Active Measures: An Update," *State Department Special Report No. 101* (Washington: US Department of State, July 1982); "Soviet Active Measures," *State Department Special Report No. 110* (Washington: US Department of State, September 1983).
8. *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 1.
9. Levchenko told his story in some detail during the 1982 House Intelligence Committee hearings. He also gave a lengthy interview in *Der Spiegel* (14 February 1983). A more dramatic account of Levchenko's KGB career is contained in John Barron's *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand* (New York: Readers' Digest Press, 1983), pp. 48-194.
10. *Soviet Active Measures*, 1982 House Intelligence Committee Hearings, p. 142.
11. *Times of India*, 15 May 1984.
12. *Soviet Active Measures*, 1982 House Intelligence Committee Hearings, pp. 144, 155.
13. Bruce Vandervort, "Swiss Shut Down Soviet Bureau, Cite Subversion," *The Washington Post*, 30 April 1983, pp. 1, 24. *Neuer Zuericher Zeitung*, 30 April 1983.
14. "World Peace Council," *Department of State Foreign Affairs Note* (April 1982), p. 4. The Chandra statement originally appeared in the July 1975 *New Times*.
15. *Soviet Active Measures*, 1982 House Intelligence Committee Hearings, p. 201.
16. *Auckland Star*, 25 January 1980.
17. A thoughtful analysis of Kremlin efforts to influence European peace movements through fronts and local communist parties is contained in J. A. Emerson Vermaat's "Moscow Fronts and the European Peace Movement," *Problems of Communism*, 31 (November-December 1982), 43-56. See also Wynfred Joshua, "Soviet Manipulation of the

- European Peace Movement," *Strategic Review*, 11 (Winter 1983), 9-18.
18. "Norwegian Jailed as Spy was Tailed by FBI," *The New York Times*, 28 January 1984, p. 4; Jan Nordheimer, "Portrait of Spy as Golden Young Man," *The New York Times*, 29 January 1984, p. 10; "Norway Expels Five Russians," *The New York Times*, 2 February 1984, p. 2. A Norwegian view of the Treholst affair can be found in Thorleif Andreassen and Gunnar Moe's, *Spies and Their Objectives in Norway* (Oslo: Forlaget Atheneum, 1984).
  19. *State Department Special Report No. 88*, p. 2. For an interesting analysis of the thematic content of Pathe's efforts see Shultz and Godson, pp. 134-49.
  20. *State Department Special Report No. 101*, p. 4. See also John Vinocur, "KGB Officers Try to Infiltrate Antiwar Groups," *The New York Times*, 24 July 1983, pp. 1, 6.
  21. Barron, pp. 173-75; Sam Jameson, "Combination of 3 Factors Creating New Japanese-Soviet Tensions," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 April 1983, p. 9; *Far East Economic Review*, 16 June 1983, pp. 46-48.
  22. The 17 November 1982 *Jeune Afrique*, a newsweekly widely read in Africa, reported as factual a forged letter from Northrop Aviation to the Chief of South Africa's air force. The August 1981 *Panorama*, a major Italian newsweekly, published an account of "secret" Pentagon nuclear war plans based on the bogus Holocaust papers, a fact omitted by the article. The *Times of India*, one of India's leading English language newspapers, on 15 May 1984 carried as straight news the false report about the US's classifying blood exports on the basis of race. On 9 March 1982, the *Times of India* also reported as factual Soviet disinformation that the CIA was using the Lahore Malaria Research Center to conduct bacteriological warfare against Afghanistan. On 2 February 1983, *Jang* carried as hard news the story, based on a fabricated speech by US Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, that the US favored the "Balkanization" of India.
  23. US Congress, Senate, *Communist Forgeries*, Hearings before the Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary (Washington: OPO, 1961).
  24. *Soviet Covert Action (The Forgery Offensive)*, 1980 House Intelligence Committee Hearings.
  25. "Soviet Active Measures: Focus on Forgeries," *State Department Foreign Affairs Note* (April 1983), pp. 1-2 and figures 1 and 2.
  26. The faked US Embassy Islamabad telegram "confirmed" ties between the murdered Afghan leader and the CIA. Because the agent sent to Pakistan to surface the forgery decided to defect, US authorities, rather than the Pakistani press, received the document. See p. 90 of the 1982 House Intelligence Hearings for a facsimile.
  27. A forged letter from President Reagan to King Juan Carlos of Spain surfaced in Madrid in 1981 and was intended to imply US interference in Spanish deliberations on the ticklish issue of Spanish entry into NATO. A facsimile can be found in "Soviet Active Measures: An Update," *State Department Special Report No. 101*, p. 2.
  28. The forged letter from NATO Commander General Haig to NATO Secretary General Luns was presumably intended to spur the anti-nuclear campaign by suggesting agreement to exert improper pressure on INF opponents. A facsimile of the faked letter is in "Focus on Forgeries," April 1983 *State Department Foreign Affairs Note*, figure 4.
  29. A bogus US Department of Commerce memorandum distorts US policy to add to frictions over the gas pipeline issue. Figure 5 of "Focus on Forgeries" provides a facsimile.
  30. A forged letter from then Deputy Secretary of State William Clark to Ambassador to Greece Montague Stearns suggests US willingness to consider a coup against the newly elected Socialist government. For a facsimile, see pp. 120-21 of *Soviet Active Measures*, 1982 House Intelligence Hearings.
  31. The forged letter to Kirkpatrick from the South African press counselor implied a link between the Ambassador and the South African military intelligence. The letter is discussed in *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 5. Bogus letters from Northrop Corporation and Aviation Personnel International to the Chief of South Africa's air force suggest a military relationship between the United States and South Africa, illegal because of the congressionally imposed embargo in force since the 1970s. See figures 6 and 9 in "Focus on Forgeries" for facsimiles.
  32. A forged West German Embassy report spoke of US plans to overthrow the Rawlings government. The allegation was carried on the front page 1 April 1983 in Ghana's leading paper, the *Peoples Daily Graphic*. See *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 4 for a facsimile.
  33. A fake 1978 NSC memorandum from Brzezinski to President Carter spoke of destabilizing Poland. This forgery appeared in the 7 February 1983 Madrid newsweekly, *Tiempo*. Forged correspondence between AFL/CIO official Irving Brown and an Italian union official later arrested as a spy for Bulgaria suggests clandestine CIA assistance for Solidarity. See *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 3.
  34. A bogus exposé of US policy toward the Third World and India, based on a forged text of a speech supposedly given by Ambassador Kirkpatrick, surfaced in the far left Indian press in January 1983. The disinformation effort was timed just before the start of a non-aligned meeting in New Delhi. See *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 7.
  35. *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 4.
  36. *Pace e Guerra*, 21 July 1983.
  37. *Corriere della Sera*, *La Nazione*, and *Giornale*, 24 July 1983.
  38. *Focus on Forgeries*, p. 2.
  39. *Portugal Hoje*, 15, 23, and 24 September 1981. See also *State Department Special Report No. 101*, p. 3.
  40. Ibid; *Nairobi Nation*, 6 December 1981; *Daily Times* (Lagos, Nigeria), 11 December 1981.
  41. *Noticias* (Maputo, Mozambique), 29 November 1982; *Ethiopian Herald*, 13 January 1983; *Daily Mail* (Lusaka, Zambia) 9 March 1983; *Times of Zambia*, 17 March 1983. See also *State Department Special Report No. 110*, p. 5.
  42. John Schidlofsky, "UM Lab Chief Forced to Leave Pakistan," *Baltimore Sun*, 9 February 1982, pp. 1, 4; *Jang* (Lahore, Pakistan), 20 February 1982; *Times of India*, 9 March 1982; *Muslim News* (Capetown), 5 May 1982. See also *State Department Special Report No. 101*, p. 3.
  43. An evaluation of the impact of active measures in the United States is provided by Ed O'Malley, head of the FBI's Intelligence Division, in the 1982 House Intelligence Committee Hearings. *Soviet Active Measures*, pp. 226-27.
  44. For a fuller discussion of the *Ethnos* affair, see Gordon Crovitz, "Pericles, Greece Needs You Back," *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 June 1984, p. 13; "The Anastasi Affair," *The New York Times*, 21 January 1984, p. 21; and John Tagliubue, "Witness in Trial Says Moscow Helped Finance Paper," *The New York Times*, 23 May 1984, p. 13.
  45. Glenn Frankel, "Officials See Soviets between the Lines of Phony Stories about the U.S. in Africa," *The Washington Post*, 3 December 1983, p. A22.
  46. Prakash Chandra, "Soviets Wage Vigorous Propaganda War in India," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 18 January 1982, p. 13.
  47. William Claiborne, "Pro-Soviet Press in India Mounts Propaganda Drive Against the U.S.," *The Washington Post*, 17 April 1983, p. 33.
  48. Eagleburger.